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WHEN DIPLOMACY FAILS.

BY BRIGADIER-GENERAL WILLIAM H. CARTER, U.S.A.

NATIONS play unceasingly at diplomacy, but the grim clouds of war loom constantly in the not distant background. Civilization advances by leaps and bounds, but its progress lies often along rough and battle-scarred roads. The wise men of a day and generation, drawing general conclusions from isolated examples, found schools of philosophy whose arguments are rudely shattered by the proofs of experience. The most altruistic conceptions of public virtue are jarred unceremoniously by the frequent appearance of weak links in the human chain, and potent and unalterable principles remain to tease those who mistake all modern ideas for progress.

The fathers who builded our constitutional form of government word by word, and line by line, based upon the history of all previous efforts, may have left much to be desired from the modern point of view; but certain inalienable principles, then as now, admit of no academic argument and remain firm in the face of all subsequent experience. Among these principles are those which acknowledge the necessity of military preparation and of making provision for the common defence, when diplomacy has failed.

Geneva and The Hague may not have fulfilled the dreams of advanced advocates of disarmament and perpetual peace, but such conferences and tribunals have not been in vain. The rapid development of lines of communication and commerce, by land and sea, has carried in its wake an absolute necessity for arbitration of minor grievances.

The opinion of the vast majority of American citizens, as expressed by the votes of their representatives, favors a large navy. We have no commercial marine to protect, for one may

sail around the world, on the usual routes of travel, without encountering a single American vessel. If it were merely to defend our coasts from attack, that could be safely guaranteed by multiplying the splendid system of submarine and land coast defences. Continued and enthusiastic support of the present naval policy arises from the general belief that the rapidly growing and magnificent fleet of battle-ships and cruisers is the greatest guarantee of peace, maintained with honor. It is easy for a nation to profess high-mindedness; but, in the eternal warfare for commercial supremacy, it is much easier to be good if the consequences of an opposite course are to be feared.

The necessity for the present enormous naval expenditures is one of the results of long and persistent neglect. The condition to which a similar neglect has brought the land forces of the nation is not generally understood; yet, as a matter of fact, a radical change from the constitutional methods of providing against invasion and insurrection has become necessary.

Although the framers of the Constitution were quite agreed that every able-bodied male inhabitant owed his services to the country in its hour of need, yet the utter futility of depending upon hastily summoned militia was the constant and unvaried experience of each trial of that method. This uniform result brought into existence that magnificent type of soldier, the American Volunteer, in all the wars of the last century; and, while his presence in future wars is assumed, it is not provided for in the complete way which should characterize the preparation of a great people for national defence.

Americans are prone to elect their representatives and then leave to their determination all questions except those of local interest. Generally speaking, this is the course of wisdom and accords strictly with the theory of government in a republic; but, in some cases, a wholesome public opinion should openly avow the support of constituents. There are no questions which arouse timidity in the average public man so much as those which affect the army. Many able men have gone down in defeat by giving opponents the opportunity to rant about the threatened liberties of the people. It takes something more than an approving conscience to withstand the misrepresentation and imputation of unworthy motives which so often characterize heated political campaigns. The extravagance which has characterized

all past wars, the recognized advantages of preparation and a proper regard for the general welfare, all unite strongly to suggest the propriety of lifting questions concerning the military and naval establishments above the plane of partisan debate. Public opinion has aided materially in doing this for the navy; but all proposals for increasing the efficiency of the military establishment have not only to run the gauntlet of ancient and well-worn arguments, but must run the additional risk of sacrifice because of the inability of any one, without Divine inspiration, to announce a date when American troops shall evacuate all the various islands now garrisoned by the army.

American pluck and luck have carried the nation through several conflicts and always with the same result, an immediate tightening of the purse-strings regarding all expenditures for military preparation. That this unwise policy has met with approval in the past cannot be denied, because there has never been a serious public opinion against it. It is a question whether the existing apathy would not disappear if the public once became aware of the real situation.

It is a wise business safeguard to take account of stock occasionally, and examine into current methods to determine if an establishment is on a proper basis as compared with competitors. These same principles apply forcefully to military preparation.

It is a fact, too obvious to require argument, that nearly every proposition looking to the inauguration of a military peace establishment capable of rapid expansion to meet the early emergencies of war, that has been submitted to Congress, has been based on the supposition of what would probably obtain favorable action of Congress, rather than on the conviction of what was really necessary. It is a common belief that any department of the government service can secure legislation needed to improve its efficiency whenever the matter at issue is presented to Congress without disagreement and contention among those who are engaged in the national service in that department. Herein lies the serious difficulty of preparing the nation in peace for the duties of war. A study of past efforts at legislation to that end must produce the conviction, in any unprejudiced citizen, not only that the conceptions of what is desirable are widely divergent in the Army and National Guard, but that, even within

the Army, opinion is naturally colored by the interests of particular corps or branches of the service, and not infrequently by personal interests.

After nearly a hundred years of effort, the rehabilitation of the militia laws was secured from Congress, but it took the shape of a jumble of compromises unsatisfactory as a whole to any of those who had long contended for revision. The main object of the new law, which was approved January 21st, 1903, was to recognize the active military organizations, or National Guard, of the States, and to encourage them with appropriations sufficient to render them immediately effective upon a declaration of war.

One section of the act as originally drawn embodied a principle which the War Department authorities were especially anxious to recognize as a part of the military system. That section provided for the organization in peace of a body of volunteers composed of men with previous experience in the Regular Army and the National Guard, to be officered by men holding appointments from the General Government instead of from the Governors of States. The act, as finally passed, was so emasculated that, while provision was made for the officers, all reference to the *men* who should compose the organizations was stricken out. The opposition was from two sources—from those members of the State troops who believed that a proper recognition of their organization would be imperilled by the organization of Veteran Volunteers, and from public men who did not wish any departure from the practice of having all volunteers State organizations, with officers appointed by the Governors.

The question which seriously concerns the American public is not whether this or that paragraph of any law is defective, but, in general, whether the Army and the organized Militia can be depended upon to meet the first requirements of sudden war. To solve this question properly requires the consideration of more details than can be discussed here; but a general statement of conditions may make the situation comprehensible.

More than half a century ago, facetious writers had made the muster days of the old-time militia a subject of constant jest, for the militia called out in nearly all our early wars seldom did honor to itself or to the country. War is an expensive school, both in national treasure and national prestige, and that potent

fact has caused unceasing efforts toward the development and legal recognition of the National Guard of the several States.

It was strange, indeed, that some of the sticklers for the letter of the Constitution had not long ago questioned the course of some of the States which had organized divisions and brigades of troops, with staff establishments and naval contingents. The opportunity for political advantage from this source has now passed, for the existing law recognizes the National Guard as the Organized Militia, in contradistinction to the militia provided by the Constitution. This action was due to the National Guard, which comprises many old organizations with excellent service records, and whose modern work takes them out of the "militia" class, which is composed of all able-bodied citizens between the ages of eighteen and forty-five.

It is not intended to discuss the efficiency, either as to numbers or training, of any State organizations, but to consider from a broad view-point whether the existing laws will furnish a weapon which may be depended upon or merely a broken reed, when the moment shall have arrived for the diplomats to make their departing bow and for battle-ships and armies to enter upon the stage.

While certain principles of the art of war remain unchanged from generation to generation, the material used by modern armies has become extremely complicated, so that we require many highly trained technical corps, in order that we may not lose any of the advantage which may be derived from the scientific application of modern inventions to the complex machinery of a great army.

Modern wars do not allow much time for preparation before the first blow is struck, and it is the first battle which counts most when the appeal to arms has been made. The prestige of a proud nation may be sadly lowered by lack of foresight and preparedness, and patriotism and material interest alike suggest the propriety of giving the highest moral support to those who undertake to fit the nation in time of peace for the shocking realities of war.

In considering the subject of military preparedness in America, everything has to be worked out as an original proposition. Great Britain is the only country with which any comparison of results may be made, because in that country, as in our own,

military service is voluntary. American observers of European manœuvres are apt to forget that the arrival of the annual drafts of recruits, available for instruction in large groups on the stroke of the clock, involves a vastly different proposition from that which is presented by the interrupted and uncertain flow of individual enlistments in England and America.

The theory on which the strength of the Regular Army has always been fixed in America is that the smallest possible force, consistent with the actual requirements of immediate necessities, shall be maintained in the highest state of efficiency. So far as their efficiency and fighting capacity are concerned, the regular troops have always justified their being; but in the effort of Congress to fix the lowest possible peace strength, the limit of safety has been passed many times.

The existing organization of the Regular Army is far below the actual needs of the nation, but it was all that could be obtained six years ago when the Philippine or Colonial policy was an acute political factor. Disregarding the Coast Artillery, the strength of whose organizations depends upon the number of guns authorized for permanent harbor defence, it is found that there are fifteen regiments of cavalry, thirty regiments of infantry and six recently authorized regiments of field-artillery, of which some of the batteries are still in process of organization. Of the forty-five cavalry and infantry regiments, six of the former and fifteen of the latter are serving overseas at island stations.

At the present time, enlistments in the Regular Army are limited to three years, so that it is necessary to relieve the regiments in the distant Philippines every two years. This is not only enormously expensive; but, owing to the fact that one-half the infantry is absent all the time and the other half is in an habitual state of reorganization and recuperation, the maximum of efficiency cannot be maintained. The cavalry furnishes less than half its numbers for service beyond the seas; but, owing to the fact that the outgoing regiments are obliged to leave behind large detachments to care for the horses during the change of stations, efficiency is seriously interfered with. So that, as a matter of fact, there are available at home stations, for insurrection or invasion, ten less regiments of infantry and one less regiment of cavalry than were considered necessary prior to 1898, when the army had been reduced to a lower strength

than it represented at any time since the Civil War. With this state of affairs it is incumbent upon thoughtful men to take account of stock and see whither the country is drifting.

The act of January 21st, 1903, divides the militia into two classes—the Organized Militia or National Guard and the “Reserve Militia.” The militia is defined to “consist of every able-bodied male citizen of the respective States, Territories and the District of Columbia, and every able-bodied male of foreign birth who has declared his intention to become a citizen, who is more than eighteen and less than forty-five years of age.”

Excluding for the moment all reference to the National Guard, or Organized Militia, let us consider the great body of citizens classed as available for reserve militia duty. It is inconceivable that a general call would ever be necessary for all the able-bodied men in the country whose population numbers about eighty millions of people. Since, then, there is to be no general call, who is to determine the manner of selecting those who are to compose the quota for a call demanding one, two or five hundred thousand men? For this there is no machinery provided, beyond the authority of the President to make the call for any portion of the militia which he may deem necessary to meet a particular emergency, and to subject any officer or enlisted man called forth to trial by court martial if he fails to report for muster, the court to be composed only of militia officers.

The existing and more recent law especially provides that “all persons who are exempted by the laws of the respective States or Territories shall be exempted from militia duty, without regard to age.” As a matter of fact, therefore, each State may determine for itself what citizens shall share in repelling invasion, although its quota under the President’s call will be apportioned according to representative population.

The law makes no distinction between the National Guard and the Reserve Militia in restricting service to a period not exceeding nine months, and for the purposes only of repelling invasion or suppressing rebellion against the authority of the United States. It is a well-recognized principle that the easiest way to prevent invasion and save an enormous distribution of force along a hostile border is to invade and seek the main army of the enemy. Isolated border combats have little influence in these days of large highly trained armies. The law states that

the militia, upon being called out, shall be mustered into the service of the United States; but it is a question for the lawyers to determine whether the new law admits of requiring the militia to serve beyond the territorial limits of the United States.

The existing law provides for arming and equipping only the Organized Militia or National Guard. The old militia of pioneer days was valuable for local emergencies mainly from the fact that every man had a rifle and knew how to use it. Modern military rifles are not found in the possession of individuals or families, so that, when the Reserve Militia is called out, it will be necessary for the General Government to arm and equip them.

Without multiplying reasons to show the defects of the reserve militia, it may be broadly stated, as a military proposition, that it is less to be relied upon than the militia of the Revolution and 1812. It is not even a broken reed—it is no reed at all, because it is absolutely untrained and without equipment or experience with firearms.

Under present conditions, the only organizations available for serious emergencies are those of the Regular Army and the National Guard or Organized Militia. These must constitute the first line, if existing laws obtain, until the provisions for raising Volunteers may be made effective.

The existing law, under which an army is provided for war purposes, was passed on April 22d, 1898, during a period of great excitement incident to a declaration of war with Spain. This law provides "that the organized and active land forces of the United States shall consist of the Army of the United States and of the Militia of the several States when called into the service of the United States." The act then defines the army, in time of war, as composed of the Regular Army and the Volunteer Army; the latter being maintained only during the existence of war or while war is imminent.

There are some well-meaning people who contend that there should be no wars and that military preparation begets a belligerent spirit. To formulate the incontrovertible but historical facts necessary to explain and disprove the specious arguments of these advocates of peace at any cost would require an expenditure of time and mental effort which might be more profitably devoted to considering facts as we find them.

The militia law of January 21st, 1903, was designed to accom-

plish, within five years from the date of approval of the act, a reorganization of the militia of the several States, Territories and the District of Columbia, so as to make it conform as far as practicable to the organization, armament and equipment of the Regular Army. To facilitate the organization, a proposed military law or code was outlined by the War Department, and suggested to the several States, with a view to its incorporation into the State codes. Although the five-year period will expire on January 21st, 1908, some of the States have not yet taken the action suggested, notwithstanding a provision of the law that, to participate in the apportionment of the annual appropriation, the organization, armament and discipline of the Organized Militia must conform to that prescribed by the Regular and Volunteer Armies of the United States. The existing law was primarily designed to secure uniformity, and Congress made liberal appropriations to enable the several States to put their organizations on an efficient basis.

After a lapse of five years, the total strength of the Organized Militia of the whole United States is 105,213, which is actually less than it was for many years preceding the passage of the act. At the recent annual inspections of the National Guard by Regular Army officers, about fifteen per cent. of the men were reported absent. Out of a total of 2,179 organizations of all kinds, 1,437 were reported as fully armed, uniformed and equipped for field service at any season of the year. The estimate made by the War Department, based on inspection reports, is that seventy-five per cent. of the members of the Organized Militia would respond to a call for troops to repel invasion. This estimate considerably exceeds the generally accepted experience in the war with Spain, when many of the National Guard organizations volunteered.

With these facts as a basis and past experience as a guide, it may be safely predicted that it will be a practical impossibility to assemble, at any one point in the United States, two completely organized Army Corps of Regulars and Organized Militia. With proper regard for the general defence, in the event of war with any first-class Power, detachments would immediately reduce the strength of these Corps, if ever assembled, below a state of fitness for offensive action.

It is hardly possible to conceive of any war in which less than

two hundred and fifty thousand men would be required at the start. All the available men of the Regular Army in the United States, and of the National Guard, would amount to but little more than one-third of that number. The outlook for any material increase in numbers and efficiency of the National Guard is not encouraging. On the contrary, the surprising part is that so many officers and men are willing to devote their time and personal means to building up creditable National Guard organizations in the face of lack of appreciation, general indifference and much actual antagonism. Some of the existing organizations are hardly worthy to be called soldiers, but many others have not only fitted themselves to answer the call of duty in emergencies, but have the framework upon which to rapidly build splendid regiments of Volunteers. This is most creditable to their enthusiasm and patriotism, but it should not prevent a recognition of the fact that the existing system and laws do not meet the needs of State or Nation.

That a remedy is needed there can be no question. The character of the remedy admits of argument; but this should not be unduly prolonged, for conditions are liable to become more acute without warning. It is believed that, with five years of experience of the existing militia law, its most ardent friends will admit that some more radical method is required to bring the organizations of all the States to a proper standard. It is not enough that a few States have well-equipped and trained regiments and even brigades.

Additional legislation is required to produce a body of troops capable of forming the first line and maintaining the prestige of the nation while a Volunteer Army is being organized. An increase of strength of the mobile force of the Regular Army is very necessary; the present force is grievously overworked and wholly inadequate for the duty now imposed upon it.

The only way in which a State can secure an absolutely representative body of troops is by universal service in the Organized Militia. A State law requiring every young man, on coming of age, to serve one year in the Organized Militia, in organizations in which the officers and non-commissioned officers are appointed and not elected, would soon justify itself to all fair-minded men for reasons not far to seek. Rich and poor alike would learn that the Organized Militia knows no class and no creed, but

stands for the majesty of the law. Lessons of patriotism, respect for flag and country and a higher regard for citizenship would be but a few of the wholesome advantages of this system, under which there should be no purchasing of substitutes. The knowledge gained by actual service would allay the suspicions, and sometimes animosities, of members of labor-unions. More liberality in supplies and armories, enhanced State pride, improvement in knowledge of firearms and an increased ability to fulfil the highest duty of a citizen of the Republic would be the natural consequences of universal State service. In no other way can the great body of citizens of the present day be made acquainted with modern arms and training, and properly fitted to fulfil their obligation, when called upon, under the provisions of the Constitution, to suppress insurrection or repel invasion.

All this could be attained, without material sacrifice of any business interests, by requiring each young man, during his first year of citizenship, to devote two evenings each week to this duty and ten days to field-instruction in camp. And it need not be all on purely military lines; but allied instruction in the duties of citizenship, in brief informal talks at the armories, would tend to weld together a homogeneous mass of intelligent thinkers and render them more capable, physically and mentally, of serving State and Nation in or out of the ranks. Such a system would prepare the coming generations for the duties of the present Reserve Militia, and those who exhibit an inclination or show special ability in such training should be encouraged to seek further service in the National Guard, which would then be composed only of instructed men or "Veterans."

There will, doubtless, be many who may think this impracticable, because States that have failed to do their duty under existing law may fail under any system of militia development. But the handwriting on the wall is clear to those who pause to read; and, if the existing system does not produce more practical results, then it will be clearly the duty of Congress to provide for the organization of a National Volunteer Reserve, of generous proportions, entirely distinct from the Organized or Reserve Militia, to be available for service within or without the territorial limits of the United States whenever war is declared or reasonably imminent.

WILLIAM H. CARTER.